

E36
2, no.
June 19

The Chronicle

of the

EARLY AMERICAN INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

Published from time to time for the Information of its Members

Volume II

June, 1940

Number 14

The Humble Hod

By JOSEPH E. SANDFORD

About two thousand two hundred years ago, the Greek comic poet Diphilus wrote a comedy called *The Brick-Carrier*. Only two lines of it have survived. This is symbolic of the lack of interest in this lowly and seemingly unimportant occupation and the resultant scarcity of material about it.

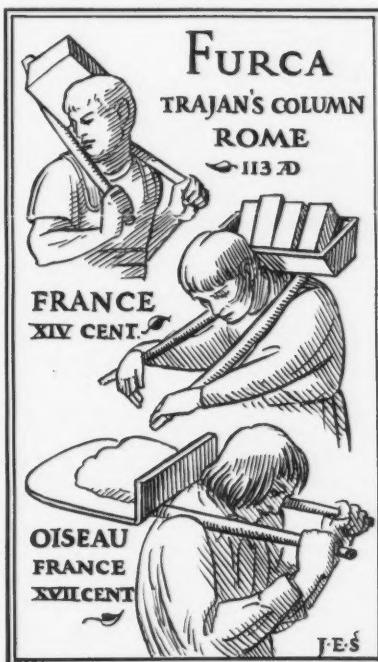
The Greek dramatists thought of the mason's helper as a stumbling clown who provided humor by falling off ladders. His was the task of carrying the weight of a wall in bricks and mortar to the skilled artisan who set them. For us he is the hod-carrier, and the basket, tray or other device which he generally carried upon his shoulder, we shall call the *hod*.

The Greek hod-carrier of Aristophanes' day (c. 400 B.C.) carried mortar in a pot. A survival of this practice, as late as the First Century A.D., may be seen in a Pompeian mural painting showing a plasterer with two low, wide-mouthed jars at his feet.

The Romans of the Second Century A.D. carried sand in a tall basket, called an *Aero*. One shown on Trajan's Column at Rome (c. 113 A.D.) seems to be equipped with a hand-grasp near its lower edge, which would be useful in steadyng it on the shoulder. Mortar they carried in a small wooden trough called an *Alveus* and these were the prototypes of the mortar trays of the Middle Ages. In the Fourth Century A.D., the Romans carried bricks in the *Aero*. The *Alveus* came down into French in the mortar tray called the *Auge*. The larger stones were carried by the aid of a forked stick carried on both shoulders. This was the *Furca*, which will be described later.

The basket hod was used in Fifteenth-Century A.D. Persia. Unlike the Roman *Aero*, the Persian basket hod, as depicted by the artist Behzad in 1494, was long and low, in the shape of a half watermelon sliced lengthwise.

These were used for carrying bricks, or, rested in rope slings, were pulled to the tops of walls. The Persians carried mortar in long wooden trays.



The basket hod does not seem to have been used in Medieval Europe. In the Eleventh Century, mortar hods, in the shape of a large scoop with a short handle, are pictured in a manuscript of Rabanus Maurus — *De Originibus* — dated 1023 A.D. From information received from Mr. Rupert Waltram, a native of Bavaria, the hod-man of that part of Germany still uses a scoop-shaped wooden hod, lined with metal and fitted with a short projecting handle.

(Continued on page 114, column 2)

Shot Tower

By G. A. R. GOYLE

After the Revolutionary war, pioneer living along the eastern seaboard of the United States became more and more secure. The Indians had been subdued and wild animals decimated. From about 1800 on, we find this comparative security reflected in the changing of rifles into the smoothbore shotguns. No longer was it a matter of life and death to be ever alert to shoot and kill for protection from lurking Indians or the onslaught of wild animals. The fire-arm of the frontiersman became a hunting weapon.

But shot-guns required shot, shot which could be produced cheaply, not by the tedious method of individual casting in a mold, or of cutting from sheet lead small cubes to be roughly rounded in a tumbling barrel. A simpler method of casting shot is said to have been invented by Watts, of Bristol, England, about 1782. Watts dreamed one night that he was out in the rain and every drop of it was a round pellet of lead. Pondering over this curious dream, he became interested in the question whether dropping melted lead would form round pellets. To solve the question, he melted some lead and poured it from the top of St. Mary Redcliffe Church into the water below. The test was successful, and he sold the invention for a handsome sum of money.

The new process of making shot was soon introduced in the United States. At the third annual exhibition of the Columbian Society of Artists, held in Philadelphia in 1813, was an exhibit which indicates the building of a shot tower in Richmond at that time. It was the exhibit of the architect Robert Mill, a "Design of the shot tower now building in the city of Richmond, Virginia, diameter 30 feet; elevation to the top of the battlement 160 feet."

There also was a shot tower in the City of New York. Bernhard, Duke

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of Saxe-Weimar Eisenach, saw it on his travels through North America, during 1825 and 1826, and he described it as follows:

"A high square pyramidal tower attracted our attention; it is a shot tower, one hundred and sixty-six feet high. The melted lead which is thrown through a tin box, whose apertures are suited to the size of shot wanting, falls from the whole height into water; while falling it forms itself into shot and becomes cold as it falls in the water. The different numbers of shot are intermixed; in order to separate the perfect from the imperfect shot, they put them in a flat basin, and by a certain motion in an oblique direction, the perfectly round ones roll down into a receiver, whilst the imperfect remain in the basin. After this they throw the good shot into a box of the shape of a bureau, with rockers like a cradle: the drawers have perforated tin bottoms, the upper drawer has the largest holes, and the lower the smallest; when the upper drawer is filled with shot, it is locked, and then the whole box is rocked for some minutes. Through this the shot is separated according to the size, and I believe there are fourteen different numbers. In order to give the shot a perfectly smooth surface, they throw it into a box which is attached to a wheel turned by water, and in this manner they are rolled for some time. They are then packed according to their number, in bags, and carried into the warehouse."

A plan of Philadelphia in *The American Traveller or Guide Through the United States* (second edition) by H. S. Tanner (Philadelphia, 1836), shows the location of two shot towers, one near the Delaware and the other near the Schuylkill River. Sparks' Shot Tower, in the Southwark district, was in the block south of Christian Street, between Front and Second Streets, and Beck's Shot Tower is marked in the block bounded by Cherry, Arch, Twenty-first and Twenty-second Streets. At that time (1836) the shot towers must have been noteworthy sights of the town, to be specially pointed out on a small-scale plan of the city of Philadelphia.

A lengthy description of a shot tower in Knight's *American Mechanical Dictionary* (New York, 1877) proves that it was then still the recognized means of casting shot. While originally the molten lead had been poured

from a colander or sieve, by that time a trough-like ladle with serrated edge had been found more suitable to pour even streams of molten lead down the tower into reservoirs of water.

The inventive spirit did not rest, and the direction in which to look for improvement was, of course, to do away with a cumbersome tower from 150 to 180 feet high, on top of which the furnace had to be kept going to melt the lead. In 1849, a process was patented by one Smith, which directed the dropping of the metal through a tube up which a strong current of air was driven. Glasgow and Wood, of St. Louis, in 1868, patented their process of dropping molten lead through a column of glycerine or oil.

Finally a method was evolved which through its simplicity and efficiency spelled the end of the shot tower. The molten lead was dropped upon a speedily revolving horizontal disk which was fenced in with side walls of perforated sheet brass. The centrifugal force threw the molten lead in uniform drops through the perforations against a surrounding canvas screen. The highly agitated air around the revolving disk cooled the drops sufficiently so that they kept their spherical shape and dropped down as round shot from the canvas.



The Hod

(Continued from page 113, column 2)

The Medieval European hod-man carried a trough upon his shoulders. It was carved out of a single piece of wood. Some hods were turned in the shape of a bowl and both types were used for carrying bricks and mortar. By the early Fifteenth Century, the French saved wood and work by building a trough of five boards—the mason's *auge*, of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.

Although the craft of the cooper was known in the First Century B.C.,—and Pliny mentions the tub—staved and hooped containers received their greatest development during the Middle Ages. The late Fourteenth-Century miniatures show large, two—"eared" tubs for mortar being raised by hoists, but it seems to have been left for the Northern Europeans of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries to use little tubs for hods.

Lifting the loaded hod from the ground to the shoulder was a back-

breaking task. The Second-Century A.D. Romans, of Sens in France, used a tall four-legged table which held the hod waist-high or better, while it was being filled. This hod-stand is found in Northern Italy and Central Germany in the Fourteenth Century, where it took the form of a tripod, and it survives in modern Bavaria. The wooden bowl or trough-shaped hods were firmly held by the top ends of the sticks which also served as legs. The tripod has the advantage of standing well on uneven surfaces.

The V-shaped trough for holding rectangular stones or bricks was in use in the late Fourteenth Century, as a cradle for a hoist. It is pictured in the building of Babel, in Rudolf of Montfort's world chronicle, a manuscript of the period.

We have seen that the Romans recognized the advantage of the long, low container, and that, in the Middle Ages, a V-shaped trough was used for holding rectangular objects. The Romans also made use of the hod-stand. All these were factors which were to make the hod as we know it.

The word *hod* was probably in use in England by the time of Edward I (1272-1307), for one Richard Witbred, *hodere*, is mentioned as having been slain in "Colman Strete" in the city of London. But there is nothing to show that Richard was a mason's helper. The word *hod* has been said to be a form of "hold"—and was applied to various containers.

The first recorded use of *hod* as a tray for mortar is found in Thomas Tusser's *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry* printed in 1573, but there is no certainty of the type of hod intended. It was not until 1688 that the V-shaped trough on a staff, which later monopolised the word *hod*, makes its appearance unmistakably. In that year the erudite Randle Holme wrote *The Academy of Armory, or Storehouse of Armory and Blazon*. Said he, "The Hod is a kind of three-square trough made up at one end and open at the other, having a staff fixed to the bottom."

Twenty-two years before Randle Holme had his folio printed, there had been a great fire in London in which 13,200 houses had been destroyed. To guard against another such conflagration, it was ordained that new building should be of stone or brick. This, with the Dutch-style influence coming from the court of William and Mary, increased the use of bricks in England.

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Dr. Henry C. Mercer thought that the staffed hod may have come from the Low Countries into England along with "Dutch clinkers" and "Flemish bond"—but such does not seem to be the case.

The famous Dutch book of trades, *Spiegel Van het menselyk Bedryft*, by Jan and Kaspar Luiken (Amsterdam, 1694), shows no staffed hod, the plasterer's laborer carrying a small tub on his shoulder. Mr. L. C. Uttenbroeck, a native of the Netherlands, informs us that he never saw a hod in use in Holland—the mason's helper carrying bricks balanced on his shoulder. He has made further inquiry of a Dutch architect who confirms this observation. Although much of England's technology was of continental importation, it is probable that the staffed hod is an English invention.

In England the hod seems to have come to full flower. The long, low trough gave it a low center of gravity, the rectangular V-shape held the bricks snugly, and the open end made unloading easy. The staff held it high and made shouldering less of a back-breaking procedure and also helped balance the trough. The sharp edge tended to cut the shoulder, so, sometime before the early Nineteenth Century, a pad or cushion was fastened to it. A hod seen in use in 1940 was without this pad—in its place was a flat piece of wood about three and one-half inches wide, the edges rounded.

The English colonists probably brought the staffed hod with them, shortly after its appearance in the homeland. The earliest American picture of a staffed hod the writer has seen is in a Book of Trades printed at Worcester, Mass., in 1807.

The first American hod patent was granted to James Short, of Roxbury, Mass., on October 31st, 1865 (U. S. Patent No. 50,741). This was for "Applying to the underside of the hod, where it rests upon the shoulder, a flexible bag for enabling the workman to carry the hod with more ease than such as commonly made." This hod was equipped with a folding handle.

Hods after c. 1870 were frequently braced with an iron bracket running from the underside of the open end of the trough to the staff, the upper end of the bracket forming a hook, so that the hod could be hung on the rungs of an endless ladder called a "hod-elevator".

The hod-elevator seems to have been an American invention. On Sep-

tember 5th, 1865, W. H. Totten of Academia, Pa., was granted a patent for a crude hod-hoist. The first practical hod-elevator dates from 1870. On July 12th of that year, J. Flowers, of Chicago, Ill., was granted a patent for an endless ladder with flexible chain uprights, which engaged cog-wheels at top and bottom; the lower pair of cogwheels, geared with others, was rotated by two hand-cranks. The loaded hods were hooked on the rungs of the ascending side, the staff resting against a lower rung to keep the

found that a forked branch could be turned into a carrying device. They merely put the branches on the shoulders with the crotch extending behind the neck and used the forward ends for handles. The load to be carried was held between the fork crotch and the neck. The *Furca* was also used as an instrument of punishment for both freemen and slaves, the arms of the offender being tied to its branches while he was whipped through the streets of the city.

Fourteenth-Century France knew the *Furca* and a mason's helper of the period is shown carrying a tray of bricks by its aid. By the end of the Sixteenth Century, the *Furca* had been improved, the two handles supporting a small platform, which had an upright board curb along its fore-edge to keep the load away from the neck of the carrier. In transition it became a *Oiseau*, a change which Littré says is possibly a corruption of *l'angeau*, a little tray.

Here ends a little journey along the pathway of the Builders. In their hands may this world be made clean and whole again.



trough from tilting backward too far. The empty hods were returned on the descending side. This machine was a common sight in the 1890's.

By c. 1922, the power-operated hoist with its pressed steel bucket rising rapidly between track guides, had taken the place of hod and hod-elevator. With this the hod cycle is complete,—for although the staffed V-trough hod would have been a strange tool to the Thirteenth-Century hod-man, the hoists with their pulley-wheels are still silhouetted against the American sky as they were in England seven hundred years ago.

The Roman *Furca*, mentioned earlier, has been left so that it may be considered in relation to its descendant, the French hod, called *Oiseau*.

"All machinery is derived from nature," said Vitruvius, and the Romans

Early American Farms

(Continued from last issue)

In no way did the gentlemen farmers better serve their country than in the improvement of live-stock, not so much by selective breeding of native cattle as by importations from abroad, such as only wealthy amateurs could finance. The results of Robert Bakewell's breeding in England had marked a revolution; the average beef had increased from about three hundred pounds to more than eight hundred. Three gentlemen in Maryland sent an agent, Matthew Patton, to England, to acquire specimens of robust Durham stock; in 1794, Patton convoyed some of their progeny to Kentucky and, in 1800, his son took others to Ohio. In another five years, descendants of these cattle were being driven back across the mountains. In 1817, Henry Clay introduced Herefords into Kentucky, the following year three excellent bulls were imported to Massachusetts and, during the eighteen-twenties, the familiar British dairy breeds, Alderneys and Guernseys, were brought in increasing numbers, Jerseys and Ayrshires coming later. Beef-fattening was an important industry in Connecticut and southeast Pennsylvania.

(Continued on page 117, column 2)

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More About Rope Making

By FRANK K. SWAIN

"Dr. Mercer and I made a rope several feet long in 1897 from tow yarn and under the guidance of Isaac Stover, a neighbor, probably 75 years old at the time. Dr. Mercer had just bought a rope-making outfit,—a two-wheeled carriage, as shown in the illustration on page 89, a head piece something like your Fig. 2, but set up like your Fig. 3, the props for keeping the strings off the ground, and a top or two. From the moment the yarn or twine was strung on the two end pieces it remained on the hooks undisturbed until the rope was finished. In 1925, I made a point of going to the Peak Cavern at Castleton, Derbyshire, England, where rope has been made in the old simple way for centuries, and sure enough the men were just stringing yarn, from balls, from the three hooks at one end to the one hook at the far end of the Cavern. This was precisely the way Dr. Mercer and I had made it. You say (page 100, middle column), 'None of the authorities consulted state specifically how this joining was accomplished' and I was interested in how the yarn was united at the Peak Cavern. A strand, one-third of a rope, was made up of several yarns and, when they were ready to be twisted, a man walked down the rope walk and examined the yarns for each strand, pulling out a coarse husk here and there and looking for any thin or weak spots. When found, he snapped the yarn apart and the sag was sufficient to allow him to place the ends between his second and third fingers with the ends sticking out beyond the knuckles of his tightly closed hand. With a dull jack-knife he then scraped first one end and then the other so that the fibres stood out in a flat fan-shape and of uneven length; very little lint was scraped away. Then, with a quick motion that I could not quite follow but, I think, by rolling each piece between thumb and finger, he twisted it a little tighter than it had been and in the same direction as the original twist which would be the reverse of the other, and holding them tight between thumbs and fingers he brought the two ends together, overlapping just a little. Relaxing his hold a little, each started to unwind in its own direction which really 'wound up' the scraped or frayed ends and made a neat and invisible joint. They used balls of twine

and strung them, several to a strand, from the three hooks on the twisting wheel to the carriage (your Fig. 4) where there was a *single* hook, just as we did. When the rope forming began, a man rode on the carriage board and the finished rope started at his end, because he, and not the man at the three hooks, twisted the three strands together. Our yarn was flax, spun on a wheel as for bags and sacking and probably finer than it would have been for rope-making. I know we produced a very fine piece of pliable rope like that used for clothes line. I rode the carriage and it screeched terribly as it went along. This must have been the usual thing, because Isaac Stover said they made rope back of the barn when he was a boy and the screeching was so loud that a flock of wild geese, flying over, heard it and settled down near them. It may resemble a falsetto goose call but it certainly isn't pleasant. I thought you would be interested to know that Peak Cavern with its enormous rope walk makes rope today as Bucks County made it in 1800—just about as simply as it could be made. Of course this does not include the spinning of the yarn, which I don't know about. The yarn at Peak Cavern was like our present asparagus twine—maybe not quite so strong. Peak Cavern is 750 yards deep. The rope walk is at the entrance which is like a huge tunnel, and sheltered from the weather.

As I think it over, there's one thing that seems queer to me. Let's make a rope right here. You stay at the carriage end of the walk where there is but one hook, and I'll go to the wheel, turning three hooks with a strand on each. The yarns are all strung and sagging on the props. You stand on the carriage platform and I begin to turn the wheel. The three hooks revolve and start twisting and tightening and shortening each strand. How long do I turn? Certainly until the sag is used up and there is a slight pull on the carriage. But has the twist reached evenly all down the line? Is it as complete at the carriage as it is at my wheel, or is it rather loose at the carriage? I believe the strands must not be twisted too tight. We decide they are tight enough and I continue to twist or turn them clockwise and you, on your carriage board, start to turn your hook, also clockwise, facing me, which is a reverse twist from mine. You immediately start to form

a finished rope, commencing at your hook, and the top keeps the twist from advancing too fast and makes the rope very tight. As the rope is formed, the strands shorten, pulling the carriage with your weight on it, towards me by little jumps and much screeching. Your twist or turn forms the rope, and all the time I am turning my wheel and twisting the three strands tighter. Now this is the point: the moment you have formed or twisted a finished part of the rope, my twisting can no longer affect that part of it but all the time I am twisting tighter and tighter the unfinished strands. It seems to me the first third of that rope would be soft and not so tight, the next third would be tighter and harder because the strands would have been twisted more and, by the time a complete rope had been made all the way up to my wheel, the last third would be very tight, very hard and stubborn. In other words, that rope would be weaker, inch by inch, as you walked away from my wheel. Is there something that counteracts this that I don't grasp? This way is probably the simplest of all and it may be the very reason for the use of your Fig. 4 (Sledge) with its three hooks, to tighten the strand twists at your end the same as mine—and then putting the three strands on to one hook on the carriage or sledge to make the finished rope. If so, they did not make use of it at the Peak Cavern rope walk but used the one-hook carriage.

When they strung the yarn there, it was continuous, the only ends being when they started and when they stopped. How they got the rope off the hooks, I don't know. It would be very tight and perhaps they cut it, which would make many ends. They probably spliced it on to another rope anyway."



The 1940 New England Antiques Map, showing the location of many antique shops, is now ready for distribution and any number of copies, within reason, are obtainable, free of charge, upon request addressed to The New England Antiques Map, 160 Fifth Avenue, New York. The 1940 Atlantic States Antiques Map will be ready in June and can be obtained then in the same manner.

Early American Industries Association

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Printed by Case the Printer,
86 Grove St., Flushing, N. Y.

Our Purpose

The purpose of the association is to encourage the study and better understanding of early American industry, in the home, in the shop, on the farm, and on the sea, and especially to discover, identify, classify, preserve and exhibit obsolete tools, implements, utensils, instruments, vehicles, appliances and mechanical devices used by American craftsmen, farmers, housewives, mariners, professional men and other workers.

Dues

The annual dues are payable September 1st, and are as follows: Regular members \$1.00; Contributing members, \$2.00; Supporting members, \$5.00; Sustaining members, \$10.00 and up. There is no distinction between the classes, except the amount of the dues, but the publication of THE CHRONICLE cannot be financed unless a considerable number of the members pay more than \$1.00. Each member is expected to voluntarily place himself in the class which represents the amount he is willing to contribute to the support of the Association for the current year. THE CHRONICLE is sent to all members without additional charge. Many of the back numbers may be secured from the Treasurer for 20c each, and a twelve-page index to the twenty-four numbers of Volume I, containing a useful bibliography, for \$1.00 each. For further information, address any of the officers.

Industrial History Society

The Industrial History Society was organized at a luncheon conference during the meeting of the American Historical Association on December 30th, 1939. The luncheon was attended by fifty individuals, and following a lively discussion, a brief constitution was adopted and officers and members of a council were elected. These Officers and Members of the Council are as follows: President, Herbert A. Kellar; Vice-President, William D. Overman; Secretary, Albert V. House, Jr.; Treasurer, Carl R. Woodward; Members of the Council: Lester J. Cappon, Arthur C. Bining, Douglas C. McMurtrie, Oliver M. Dickerson and Everett E. Edwards.

At the organization meeting, it was decided to leave open the question of the definite scope and activities of the Society for subsequent determination by the Officers and Members of the Council. They were likewise empowered to confer with a Committee of Economists, headed by Dr. Arthur H. Cole, of the Business Historical Society (previously appointed by a group of interested individuals at the meeting of the American Economic Association in Philadelphia on December 29th), for the purpose of discussing, and if possible agreeing upon, a method of cooperation or allotment of interest among several groups concerned with various aspects of the general field of economic theory and practice. It is the desire of the Officers and Members of the Council that the Industrial History Society be made not only a national organization, but a useful and productive one, resting upon a sound basis, and it is believed this can be done.



Farms

(Continued from page 115, column 3)

vania, but dairy stock was more esteemed in most sections of the East. In 1790, eighty-five pounds of butter were thought a good annual yield for a cow in Massachusetts; by 1830, the average had been doubled, due to better breeding and more intelligent care. The old lean swine were supplanted in like manner during this period, though, at the beginning, it would have taken a bold prophet to foretell that America would eventually become the chief pork-producing area of the world. American farmers made some gain

with native animals, especially with the grass-fed hog of New York, but more from importations. During the last years of the eighteenth century came a notable consignment from the Duke of Bedford to George Washington, the Woburn stock; an unfaithful agent who brought them sold them elsewhere, but they soon set new marks in Virginia, Maryland, and Massachusetts. Quakers in Chester County, Pennsylvania, starting in 1820, with stock from Bedfordshire, developed a famous breed which bore their county's name throughout the Union. Other stock of Chinese strain added weight and succulence to pork in many sections of the country and, by 1830, the Berkshires had arrived, with an ensuing flurry of speculation.

One of the most sensational episodes in the agricultural history of America resulted from the importation of Spanish sheep. The average flock of 1800, despite the efforts of a few leaders like Washington, was no better than that of 1700. During the two years thereafter, two French gentlemen living in this country, M. Du Pont de Nemours and M. Delessert, and two American diplomats, Robert R. Livingston and David Humphreys, introduced specimens of merinos, the finest sheep in the world. Even merino half-breeds sheared a double quantity of wool. The hundred that Colonel Humphreys brought back from Spain was a prosperous beginning, but neither his sheep nor others attracted much attention, because of the traditional inertia of the farmers, explained in part, as we have seen, by the lack of market. Legislatures offered premiums and struck medals, but little heed was paid and some who acquired merinos by chance ate them, unaware of the fabulous prices the breed would soon command. Livingston set out to make a market and bought certain specimens at figures that stunned their negligent owners.

But a far more effective inducement came with strained relations between the United States and Great Britain. Hitherto Americans who had sought to manufacture woolens for sale could not compete with English importations; in 1807, an embargo cut these off and opportunity for profits in American manufacture brought a high demand for raw material; Humphreys, Livingston and Du Pont, among others, established woolen mills, and, by 1810, there was at least two dozen.

(Continued in next issue)

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Medicine Chests

By LAWRENCE B. ROMAINE

In the magazine *Antiques* for September, 1938, under "Riddles and Replies," Lockwood Barr asked for the working dates of a gentleman by the name of N. Starkey, No. 66 South Street, Philadelphia. Mr. Barr's piece, carrying Mr. Starkey's label, was a handsome mahogany medicine chest. Having in my own collection a chest of similar proportions, I attempted to locate this druggist or cabinet-maker, whichever he was. The results of my efforts appeared in *THE CHRONICLE* not long ago, without ever catching up with Mr. Starkey at all! However, if the members and readers benefited one hundredth part in the research I enjoyed, I shall be satisfied.

A week ago I was startled by the discovery of a small paper covered pamphlet with the following title page:

MEDICINE CHESTS
of all kinds
with
Directions
Suitable to their contents
Are carefully put up by
DANIEL HENCHMAN
Cambridge Street
Corner of Chamber Street
BOSTON
Composed of medicines of the
best quality and sold at a
low price.
BOSTON
Printed by William Bellamy
Congress Street
1825

The small 16mo. booklet contains but sixteen pages. It does not give the dimensions of the chests nor describe their construction. The date, the medicines noted and the instructions to all "masters of vessels and supercargoes" are significant, for they bear out my notes in *THE CHRONICLE* for September, 1939.

A list of the medicines contained in each chest follows: 1. Rhubarb; 2. Opodeldoc; 3. Peruvian Bark; 4. Castor Oil; 5. Elixir Salutis; 6. Spirit of Nitre; 7. Tartar Emetic; 8. Balsam Capaiva; 9. Essence of Peppermint; 10. Sugar of Lead; 11. White Vitriol; 12. Basilicon; 13. Mercurial Ointment;

14. Jalap and Calomel mixt.; 15. Turrlington's Balsam; 16. Mercurial Solution; 17. Is Laudanum; 18. Salts; 19. Elixir Vitriol; 20. Turner's Cerate; 21. Snake Root; 22. Chamomile Flowers; 23. Spice Bitters; 24. Lancet for Bleeding.

The rest of the booklet is given over to instructions to the Captain. Everything is considered, from venereal diseases to bad breath, gun-shot wounds are discussed, and the last page is worth quoting:

"The disorders to which men are subject, are so many and so intricate that it is not possible to lay down directions proper for their treatment any further than to mitigate their most obvious symptoms, and in some measure conduce to a cure by assisting nature. It is therefore very seriously recommended to Masters of vessels and supercargoes, whenever they are in a harbour, that they send for a physician or surgeon upon the first attack of any disease or immediately after an accident happens to anyone—that they take advice, so as to employ the most experienced and judicious in their professions—and in a particular manner that they do not employ ignorant quacks who are in the habit of visiting foreign vessels—impose on seamen—and often cost them their lives."

Daniel Henchman is listed in the True and Green's "Correct List of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston Voted at a Legal Meeting of the Freeholders, etc., held 14th day of January, 1822," as living at No. 6 Chambers St., owning \$1,800 worth of real estate and \$800 worth of personal property and paying a tax of \$22.14; \$2.74 of which was to the State and \$19.40 to the town and county. In the Boston Directory for 1839, he is listed as a druggist at No. 41 Cambridge St., living at No. 4 Chambers St.

This may seem irrelevant but it stands back of the notes in answer to Mr. Barr's question as to the date of medicine chests in general. It also substantiates my conclusions as to the production of such medicine chests,—namely, that they were made from about 1800 to 1840, generally for use on board ship and, for the most part, in the seaport towns and cities. The question as to which cabinet makers supplied the druggists, whether they

made and specialized in medicine chests only, designed by the druggists to carry what they considered the necessary bottles and equipment, and just who they were, still remains unanswered. However, here is proof, checking the list with the bottles still in my chest, that the booklet refers to just such chests, and the date is on the title page. Could Henchman have filled Starkey's chests with medicines? Or were they both druggists, and the cabinet-makers still unknown?



Fly Trap

By HARRY S. GOODWIN

The Yankee is extolled for his adaptability and ingenuity. Whenever he was short a thing, he either swapped for it or set to and made a contrivance that, according to him, an-



FLY TRAP

squared the purpose. Self-assurance in his ability to do a thing was his "right-hand man." I remember, in the village of my childhood days, an old stone mason, who, as the saying goes, "could turn his hand to anything." One neighbor, being asked who could repair a rig, answered, "Get Jonas to do it. He can do anything. If you ask him to make a watch, he will make what he calls a watch."

On examining many Yankee devices, it would seem that some of them did not merit, in usefulness or in time-saving, the hours expended to turn them out, but the folks of early New England did not have to be taught the use of leisure. Yankee aptitude for truly manufacturing (making by hand) his own needs is shown in the cut. The pine bottom is $8\frac{1}{2}$ " by $12\frac{1}{2}$ " and the top is $7\frac{1}{2}$ " by $12\frac{1}{2}$ ". These are hinged with wire. A hand-wrought nail, on the edge of the top, two inches from the open end, serves to help in setting the wooden spring. Sorghum was put on the bottom. As the flies ate this, the "trapper", pressing the top down quickly, demolished them.

Early American Industries Association

Membership

Membership lists should be amended as follows: (N) indicates new member; (S) indicates non-member subscriber; (Ch) indicates change of address; (D) indicates decease; (R) indicates resignation; (Co) indicates correction.

CALIFORNIA

Santa Anita: Lyon, W. Parker, Lyon Pony Express Museum, 130 W. Huntington Drive (N)

CONNECTICUT

Bethel: Britto, Officer (N)

Devon: Rogers, Prof. Edward H. (N)

MASSACHUSETTS

Amherst: Myrick, Norman, 321 Lincoln Ave. (N)

NEW JERSEY

Glen Rock: Deuble, Mrs. Walter, 24 Princeton Pl. (N)

Hohokus: Meissner, Charles, 327 N. Maple Ave. (N)

Plainfield: Palmer, C. C., 909 W. 7th St. (Ch)

NEW YORK

Chappaqua: Clum, Mrs. Harold H. (N)

Hewlett: Williams, Mrs. Sarah, Woodside Drive (Ch)

New York: Rosenwald, Miss Janet, 57 Charles St. (N)

Schenectady: Bahr, Frank C., 1203 Albany St. (N)

Watertown: Green, Howard (Ch)

PENNSYLVANIA

Millersville: Osburn, Dr. Burl N. (N)

RHODE ISLAND

Providence: Campbell, Wallace, 100 Alumni Ave. (N); Miner, George L., 276 Blackstone Blvd. (N); Sharpe, Henry Dexter, 84 Prospect St. (N)

Westerly: Utter, C. Benjamin, 40 Grove St. (N)

The Questionnaire

Questionnaires recently received have been tabulated as follows. For key to abbreviations, see page 7.

CONNECTICUT

Ridgefield: Douglas Curry (D). Deals in KH, TC. Write only*.

Rocky Hill: L. H. Webber (D). Deals in HD, KH, LD, MA, TC.

Stratford: David B. Boothe, Putney Gardens (C). Collects FT, KH, TC, etc. Specializes in hand-made baskets. Wants LP. Write*. Visit (large private museum, including fully equipped blacksmith and wagon shop).

MASSACHUSETTS

Shrewsbury: Mrs. Alice H. Segersten, 165 Oak St. (C). Collects KH, TC. Wants LP. Write. Visit. (Plans to establish a Junior Craft Guild to educate young people in the old-time crafts).

NEW YORK

Brooklyn: David B. Elias, 701 Ralph Ave. (C). Collects HD, TC. Write*. Visit.

East Hampton: East Hampton Historical Society. Exhibits FT, HD, HF, KH, LD, SI, SM, TC, WH, WM (East Hampton only). Wants LP.

PENNSYLVANIA

Lansdowne: Mrs. Charles S. Musser, 25 Dudley Ave. (C). Collects interesting and historic bells. Wants LP. Write. Visit.



What Old Tools Mean

By DR. DIXON RYAN FOX

The American people are caught and carried on by a flooding enthusiasm for antiquities. The springs of this enthusiasm are found partly in a response to good design developing from sophistication in the principles of art. In this consideration, a thing, whatever it may be, is valued not simply because it is old but because it is beautiful. If it expresses a high dream of human aspiration it quickens a sense of fraternity that reaches back across time, and a pious gratitude as for a bequest. In contemplating the productions of age of handicraft, one naturally associates resulting beauty with the taste and skill of an individual; a single human hand cut every curve and angle. With a modern manufactured article it strains the imagination to think back through the impersonal touches that have merely supplemented mechanical processes, back to the designing mind. Even if this feat can be accomplished we reflect that the article before us shares the remote effort with a hundred thousand other articles. The sense of individuality is lacking.

With an ancient tool the human association is more insistent. The tool was the extension of a man's arm. Through it flowed desire and achievement. It comes as near humanity as can any insentient thing. It was made directly by a man and was part of the working force of a man, whereby the circumstances of civilized life were built. Where we have no better record, we mark the periods of man's development by the tools he used,—the rough stone age, the polished stone age, the bronze age, and so on. With a mental picture of the tool that is before us, we fashion a whole conception of the life in which it once played its part.

The man or woman who fancies old tools and collects them as possessions may be charged with seeking an escape from the present realities of this machine-made age. There are those who tell us that we should keep our eyes on the map of the future, seeking

to trace out its hidden patterns. Actually all we could possibly make out, however hard we strained our eyes, would be the faint lines which have been projected out of the solid past. No guess as to the future has the slightest claim to consideration unless it is drawn out from trend lines in the past. It is useless to talk about the present. All that we can mean by that term is the recent past, for the present has no time dimension; it is merely what is becoming past. But the recent past itself is to be understood only in the light of what brought it about. Shakespeare remarks in *Henry IV*: "There is a history in all men's lives Figuring the nature of the times deceased;

The which observed, a man may prophesy,
With a near aim, of the main chance
of things
As yet not come to life, which in
their seeds
And weak beginnings lie intreasured.
Such things become the hatch and
brood of time."

He was thinking of individual lives and the predictability of character. Something the same could be said of the life of the race. There is some such utility in the study of history—but it can easily be overestimated.

Searching the past for the seeds of the present and the future is not the only wise employment of it, and I am not sure that it is the best. It would represent a hopeless impulse with respect to many of the early industries. We will get no hints on the next developments in electric lighting by studying how we made candles. The fact is, philosophy is nourished by the discovery that men and women once lived very differently from any way we know today, acted differently, used different things, and yet were happy and useful to their kind. As travel in space among peoples of differing custom is said to be broadening, so too, is travel by imagination in the realm of time. It affords us experience and data that make for objectivity in our criticism of ourselves and our own times, suggesting what is central and fundamental in human life.

There were certain moral qualities that grew naturally in the industrial independence of the family, qualities which we must contemplate, qualities which we must resolve not to lose under the impact of other conditions. Ancient tools are constant reminders of these qualities.

Early American Industries Association

COMMUNICATIONS

From Mr. JOHN H. RUCKMAN:

"In early issues of THE CHRONICLE, you wrote of the manufacture of felt hats. I have recently re-read these articles, hoping to find mention of 'Roram Hats'!"

My grandfather kept a country store here in Bucks County, Pa., from 1807 to 1840 or later. In the old daybooks of the store, an item which appears quite frequently is a Roram Hat, usually priced at about \$3.00. In a book covering the years 1815 to 1817 are the following entries:

July 31, 1815, Ephriam Bowman,	
Dr. to Fur Hat	3.50
July 31, 1815, Jno. Ruckman,	
Dr. to Roram Hat	3.00
(Charged to himself, at cost)	
Jan. 13, 1816, Jos. Wilkinson, r.,	
Dr. to Roram Hat	3.50
July 9, 1816, J. S. Reans,	
Dr. to Roram Hat	3.00
July 13, 1816, Dan'l Sweeney,	
Dr. to Roram Hat	3.00

General Davis, in his *History of Bucks County*, 1876 Edition (page 807), speaks of advertisements in the *Pennsylvania Correspondent*, for 1805, one of which was 'Mahlon Carver, of Milton, has a quantity of Roram Hats for sale,' and I wonder if any of the present generation can tell what they were. Was it simply a local name for a high fur or silk hat which was more universally worn in those days?

'Wool Hats' sold for much less. Some of the straw hats were made locally but the main supply came from Philadelphia. The 'Fur Hat' sold Ephriam Bowman for \$3.50 the same day that Grandfather took what he called a Roram hat out of stock for himself leads me to think they were one and the same, but why the name?"

[The Mallory Hat Company, of Danbury, Conn., were unable to answer this question, but referred us to *Hat Life*, whose editor replied as follows: "The name of Roram Hats rings a faint bell in my memory, but not loud enough for me to identify it. Just for fun though, I am going to publish a paragraph of inquiry in the next issue of *Hat Life* and see what happens." ED.]

From Mr. J. EARLE BACON:

"In the June, 1939, CHRONICLE was a note concerning 'Man-killers' which, if the testimony of several old men is

true, didn't quite tell the whole story. It is said that managing one was far more tiring than following a plough and therefore a chap who could 'take it' got a higher wage. But, furthermore, it is alleged that when a tine struck a rock or stump the trip-handle flew up instantly and positively and, if the driver was bending forward at all, broken jaws or even ribs were the result. So they were dangerous to operate over uneven fields and the operator had to be on the alert every moment, as horses slow up for hollows and side slopes. No compensation laws then, so a chap drove one at his own risk."



From Mr. C. B. STEBBINS:

"I am enclosing a picture of a vacuum cleaner which I think must be at



VACUUM CLEANER

least fifty years old. It is called the "Ideal" and was made by American Vacuum Cleaner Co., 225 Fifth Avenue, New York. It is operated by moving the long handle back and forth, which creates a feeble suction at the end of the hose. In the large compartment are several removable screens of cloth through which air passes to collect the dirt. This cleaner was just recently unearthed and the whole contraption weighs over thirty pounds. If you can throw any light as to its age, value, etc., I would greatly appreciate your informing me."



From Mr. NEWTON C. BRAINARD:

"Two books have recently appeared in England which should appeal to all of us. They are *Country Relics* by H. J. Massingham and *Made in England* by Dorothy Hartley. Both are written to preserve and keep alive the old country crafts in England. They

present an unusual and interesting comparison between the approaches of two authors to a single subject, as they cover many of the same trades, and one author is a man, the other a woman.

Curiously, it is the woman who gives us the better picture of the details of the trades, both by text and illustration. Mr. Massingham, who is the contributor of a delightful weekly column in *The London Field* on country life, builds his account, with considerable sentiment, around the private collection of old tools he has assembled in his garden museum, "The Hermitage." Miss Hartley, more factual, takes us farther afield in her visits to the various trades. Mr. Massingham's book is more ornate in form and in its delicate and delightful drawings by Hennell. Miss Hartley has supplemented her text with her own pen to furnish what might be called working drawings, equally satisfactory in their own way. Possibly Mr. Massingham will gain more regard from the uninitiated, but Miss Hartley will have a bit more appeal to those already converted. Both books are deserving not only of praise but of reading. I have put them on the shelf with *The Village Carpenter* by Rose, which to me is a classic.

It is interesting to note and surprising at first that so many of the trades described never survived in this country. We think of New England as a transported bit of old England, but a new environment and new natural resources made unnecessary here many of the crafts of the old country. Shingles were easy to get and better than thatch and stone. Stone walls were the result of clearing fields rather than work in the quarry, and nature selected the stones. The Bodger, however, left his mark, as anyone who loves Windsor chairs can see from Mr. Massingham's book. I found familiar tradition, too, in the note that the stone from the layers nearest the surface made the best roofing. Only a few years ago, when building and using Connecticut Portland Brownstone trim, an old quarry man gave me the same advice,—the nearer the surface the better the stone.

Both of these authors deserve our encouragement by the purchase of these books."

